



MAY

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Interagency Cooperation

Information for this article was provided by Christy Darden, Environmental Engineer at WFLHD.

Walden Point Road, located on the Annette Island Reserve within the Metlakatla Indian Community in Alaska, is a unique example of a complex project that required close communication across a variety of agencies. Unique aspects of this project include the involvement of the Department of Defense, the combination of both road and ferry transportation, the type of public involvement, and the location of the project on Alaska's only Indian Reservation.

Annette Island is located at the southern tip of the Alexander Archipelago of southeastern Alaska, and is part of the "Inland Passage" between the Clarence and Revillagigedo Straits. Annette Island is situated 18 air miles southwest of Ketchikan near the U.S./Canadian border. The island itself is 20 miles long and 12 miles wide, surrounded by islands that are part of the Tongass National Forest.

The community of Metlakatla, which translated means "calm channel" was founded in 1887 by Reverend William Duncan and a band of Tsimpshian Indians searching for religious freedom. Father Duncan negotiated with President Grover Cleveland to secure a safe haven for the tribe. The Tsimpshians selected Annette Island because of its sheltered bay, gently sloping beaches, and nearby waterfall. On August 7, 1887, Father Duncan and 823 Tsimpshians celebrated the birth of their new community, a tradition that has carried forward to this day.



Federal Highway Administration



Four years later in 1891, the U.S. Congress officially recognized Metlakatla as a federal Indian Reservation. Today, Metlakatla is home to 1,600 residents. The community is serviced for most of the year once or twice a week by the Alaska Marine Highway System, with more frequent service provided during the summer. The community is accessible by airplane, but high costs and inclement winter weather limit the extent of air travel. An all-ferry route was initially considered to meet transportation needs, but would be too expensive and impractical to operate from Metlakatla to Ketchikan, especially during the winter months. The preferred solution was to provide a combination of 13 miles of road along the northwest side of the island to Walden Point, and then a 3-mile ferry run to the city of Saxman. Although the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT & PF) has long recognized the road/ferry combination as a solution, funds were not available due to the demands of the existing highway system.

Now, because of a joint effort between ADOT & PF, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Metlakatla Indian Community (MIC), Department of Defense (DOD) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the concept can become a reality.

The FHWA will take the lead on project design and has already begun preliminary work with aerial photography and soil, geotechnical, and topographic surveys. The FHWA will also provide information for the environmental process and design detail for permits as needed, ensuring that environmental commitments are incorporated into the final document.

The DOD will incorporate the project as part of their Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program. The IRT program assists communities with special needs and provides medical and engineering services that in turn provide military personnel with realistic training opportunities. The military will provide the necessary equipment, and personnel to carry out construction activities. Approximately 150 military personnel will set up camp to perform crushing operations during the summer of 1997. Roughly 300 workers will construct the project during the summers of 1998-2000. A final round of 150 workers will complete the project during the summer of 2001. Because so many agencies, groups, and issues are involved in this project, all target dates are tentative. Maintenance funds for the project will be provided by the BIA and carried out by the community of Metlakatla. The FHWA may possibly administer contracts for the construction of permanent bridges, major culverts, and asphalt.

The public involvement process began in early 1996 and will continue throughout the project. Public involvement includes a series of community workshops and meetings and call-in interviews on the local television channel and radio station.

The BIA is the lead agency responsible for the environmental process and will manage overall project development, including a cultural resource survey within the project corridor. The ADOT & PF will prepare the environmental assessment and address resources studies needed to meet environmental requirements.

Technology Development on the Internet

The Technology Development Team has created an Internet Web Site as a focal point for information and contacts on new technology. The mission scrolls at the bottom to constantly remind us to promote development and implementation of new technology in WFLHD with our partners. We will endeavor to provide original information with frequent updates as we acknowledge your comments and make necessary adjustments. A Guest Book is provided so that we can better know our customers and users. We will strive to make regular improvements to meet the needs of our customers. Presently the page highlights the team membership, our mission, the focus areas, our coordination efforts, the Priority Technology Program, and some of the New Directions we are taking to participate in the Long Term Pavement Performance (LTPP) program, the Highway Innovative Technology Evaluation Center (HITEC) product evaluations, and in the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) in the states of our jurisdiction.

A limited number of critical links are prominently provided to get to other web sites important to our focus areas. In an effort to keep the site original and not replicate other sites, we are limiting the links provided to only those we, and our customers, think are most critical for the expansion of our program efforts. Presently we include links to the National Highway Institute, NHI; the National Technical Institute, NTU; the Office of Technology Applications, OTA; the Strategic Highway Research Program, SHRP; the Transportation Research Information Service, TRIS; and, on a lighter note but often critical, the local weather from the National Weather Service. The two training links are important for sharing training opportunities to expand our customers' knowledge base. The OTA and SHRP sites are critical links for a majority of our nationwide program emphasis areas. The TRIS site provides information about the extensive research data base, which we can now access, to help answer questions and expand our knowledge base.

When you log on, visit our Welcome pages first. These five pages will give you insight to what we are trying to accomplish. Page one explains our organization. Page two describes the mission focus. Page three discusses the coordination efforts we take advantage of and continually develop. Page four describes our Priority Technology Program involvement, where we will highlight the new technologies, or technologies new to us, which we are implementing. Page five explains the new directions we will be taking based on our involvement with LTPP, HITEC, LTAP, and similar Technology Transfer and sharing opportunities.

You can access the Western Federal Lands Highway Division Home Page with one button click. From there you have access to other WFLHD pages, such as ERFO and Project Development. We are working with several sections in WFLHD to establish additional pages.

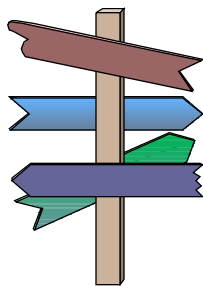
Another single button click from the TD page and you can go to the FHWA Home Page, operated from Headquarters. From there you have access to several Headquarters Offices, other DOT administrations, and other links like States and highway associations.

An important feature in the TD site is the availability of our Technology Development Newsletters. Two recent issues are currently provided and all future issues, including this one, will be available as they are published. This will provide a wider distribution and allow access with down loading capability to everyone having Internet access. The TD Newsletters are accessed through Adobe Acrobat Reader shareware, which is provided. The TD Newsletter format and process has been updated for more efficient and effective world wide web access. We plan to establish an area in the site for TD Newsletter issues as they become older so that they can be retrieved, yet not take up space in the more current area of the web page.

The Technology Development Internet address is **<http://www.wfl.fha.dot.gov/td/>**. You may also access the TD page from the WFLHD Home Page. A Feedback form is available for you to quickly and easily make comments, suggestions, complaints, or praises. A Guest Book is also available for your registration so that we can better know who you are and address your needs.

Please visit the site, look around, “sign in” at the Guest Book, and give us your feedback.

ROAD SIGNS



Robert Frost once said he could sum up all he knew about life in three words,
“It goes on.”

Please send all submissions to Kristi Swisher - (360.696.7572). Be sure your name, title, and phone number are the way you want them to appear in the article. Articles are subject to editor/layout approval and may be condensed if space is limited.

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